

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 and 16-32 are pending in the present application.

At the outset, Applicants would like to thank Examiner Hailey for the indication that the previous rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over the Datta et al has been withdrawn (Office Action mailed December 16, 2003, page 2, lines 6-7). Applicants would also like to thank Examiner Hailey for the indication that Claims 4, 7, 8, 10-13, and 17-21 are allowable (Office Action mailed December 16, 2003, page 4, numbered paragraph 3).

The rejection of Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9, and 14-16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Weimer et al (U.S. 6,565,820) is obviated by amendment.

Applicants make no statement regarding the propriety of this ground of rejection, but note that this ground of rejection has been obviated by the amendment herein. Specifically, Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9, and 14-16 have been cancelled or amended to selectively incorporate the limitations of allowable Claims 4, 7, 8, 10-13, and 17-21. These claims are presented as Claims 1-3 and 16-32.

In view of the amendments herein, Applicants request withdrawal of this ground of rejection.

The objections to Claims 4, 7, 8, 10-13, and 17-21 as being dependent on a rejected base claim and to Claim 15 for lacking consistent language are obviated by the present amendment. Withdrawal of these objections is requested.

Applicants submit that the application is now in condition for allowance, and early notification of such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Norman F. Oblon
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 24,618

Vincent K. Shier, Ph.D.
Registration No. 50,552

Customer Number

22850

(703) 413-3000
Fax #: (703)413-2220
NFO:VKS